

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 118734
ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118734

FROM DRAPER, NEA/ARN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, PFOR, PGOV, IZ, U.S.

SUBJECT: RETURN OF ARCHEOLOGICAL ARTIFACTS

1. FATHER CARNEY GAVIN, CURATOR, HARVARD UNIVERSITY SEMITIC MUSEUM, WISHES TO VISIT IRAQ IN MID-SEPTEMBER FOR ABOUT TEN DAYS. HIS BASIC MISSION IS TO RE-ESTABLISH AMICABLE RELATIONS BETWEEN HARVARD INSTITUTIONS AND THE IRAQ MUSEUM AND RELATED IRAQI ORGANIZATIONS. HE WILL BE BRINGING WITH HIM SOME OF THE CUNEIFORM TABLETS EXCAVATED BY HARVARD FROM NUZI, NEAR KIRKUK, SOME 50 YEARS AGO. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE EXCAVATION AGREEMENT UP TO APPROXIMATELY 660 SUCH TABLETS ARE TO BE RETURNED. FATHER GAVIN INTENDS TO PROPOSE A TRAVELING EXHIBITION IN 1979-80 WHEN THEY WILL BE READY FOR TRANSPORT.

2. WHILE IN IRAQ, GAVIN WOULD ALSO LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH IRAQI EXPERTS PROBLEMS OF CONSERVATION, REBAKING AND STORAGE OF SUCH TABLETS. HE WISHES TO BRING WITH HIM A SPECIALIST IN MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY IN ORDER TO SECURE RECORDS

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OF THE TABLETS THE IRAQIS THEMSELVES HAVE. IDEALLY, ALSO, HE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT NUZI.

3. THERE IS WHITE HOUSE INTEREST IN THIS VISIT. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT COULD HELP NORMALIZE U.S./IRAQI RELATIONSHIPS IN A MUTUALLY USEFUL FIELD. ONE PROBLEM HAS BEEN THAT GAVIN'S LETTERS TO THE IRAQ MUSUEM HAVE GONE UN-

ANSWERED. WE PRESUME IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR USINT TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THIS VISIT, GET IN TOUCH WITH THE IRAQI MUSEUM AUTHORITIES AND OTHERS, ON GAVIN'S BEHALF. PLEASE ADVISE IF YOU FORESEE ANY PROBLEMS WE HAVE NOT ANTICIPATED HERE. OTHERWISE, INSTRUCTIONS TO MOVE AHEAD ON FOREGOING LINES WILL BE SENT IN ABOUT A WEEK. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 23-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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